

The New Year is a time for goal setting. Individuals take note of good changes they want to make and set them into action. The same can be said for our Early Childhood Coalitions of Alberta. Coalitions across Alberta are preparing to review EDI results that are being released by the Tri-Ministry. The Tri-Ministry is composed of Alberta Health, Alberta Education and Alberta Community & Social Services (Early Childhood Coalitions fall under the latter). It is after reviewing these results that individual Coalitions begin to set goals for the upcoming year and future.

EDI, or Early Development Instrument, is a 103-item questionnaire used by Kindergarten teachers to assess overall development in a child's first five years of life. Parents may choose whether to include their child in the EDI collection, and no individual results are given. The information collected through the EDI gives understanding of the current state of children's developmental health in a community. Provincial bodies, Coalitions, and community stakeholders use the information to create effective action and mobilization of resources that reflect the need of the pre-kindergarten aged children in their community.

There are five domains of development that the instrument assesses: Physical Health and Well-being, Social Competence, Emotional Maturity, Language & Cognitive Development, and Communication Skills & General Knowledge.

The EDI scores for each developmental area are divided into three categories- on track, at risk, or vulnerable. The categories are based on percentiles that are compared to national data. On track represents scores that are expected or higher than expected for their age. At risk scores are lower than expected which suggests greater risks for continuing in a low achievement and health trajectory. And children who score below the 10<sup>th</sup> percentile are considered vulnerable for problems later in childhood.

In the following five weeks we will discuss each domain more specifically, giving understanding to the skills and competencies that are being examined in the EDI and provide tools for caregivers to help their little ones develop the best they can.